

...such useful guidance, the draft policy statement in its present form is not entirely clear, is subject to misinterpretation, and contains a mixture of strategy, policy, and operational techniques and supporting discussion. In its present form, the draft policy statement would be most difficult to translate into cohesive and effective war plans and/or other supporting plans.

Comment: a. Is it unclear as to which current plans are called into question by this policy paper, or as to what details would have to be changed to conform to it, or as to how they would have to be changed?

b. Is it unclear what current programs would have to be modified, and what new ones would be emphasized, and what current practices would have to be modified, in conformance to this policy?

c. Is it unclear in what respects this policy diverges from past ones?

d. Is it less clear than the President's Budget Message? Is it inconsistent in tone or detail with any aspect of that message? If so, where? (Criticism along this line could be an effective indictment).

e. In view of answers to above questions, what are some examples of possible, significant misinterpretations? And what, by the way, is the useful guidance?

2. (4a) The tone of the paper is negative and reactive. While it is sound to seek safeguards against war through inadvertency and an outcome short of annihilation, the basic objective to defeat the enemy in "central" war must not be lost or equivocated. Nor may the degree or nature of force required to accomplish this objective be reliant upon the pre-judged intentions of the enemy.

Comment: a. While objective to ~~xxx~~ defeat the enemy is important (and included in "most urgent objectives"), it is not the only important objective with respect to the military outcome of the war. Another objective is: not to be defeated. This is a distinguishable objective (not merely the mirror image of the first), because in a thermonuclear war, unlike a boxing match, there is an important range of possible outcomes in which neither side has "defeated" the other in a significant, decisive sense.

There are other outcomes in which, though neither side has been "defeated" in a military sense, both sides have lost in terms of their civil outcome and their military strength relative to their parties; or, if one side has ~~x~~ "won," it may have won a ~~xxx~~ Pyrrhic victory, which is not a suitable national objective.

This statement of objectives is meant to indicate that:  
1) although decisive military superiority is highly desirable and important, it is not ~~xx~~ to be overvalued to such an extent as to imply that all lesser military outcomes are indistinguishable; even though in certain circumstances, military "victory" in a decisive sense may be unattainable, the actual military outcome remains highly important. It remains important to avoid "defeat," to avoid a situation in which the US is effectively disarmed before armed opponents.

2) it is not to be pursued in a manner which would involve

will ever come to pass and, if it does, the US will not be privy to the nature of Soviet strategy.

Comment: The posture described is desirable, in terms of US objectives, regardless of the enemy's choices of posture. If the enemy chooses to maintain an uncontrollable, accident-prone, vulnerable, non-enduring force targeted against US cities in all circumstances, the US posture would still have been thoroughly worthwhile in terms of overall objectives; at the worst, it might turn out that some "insurance" money might have been saved (as is always the risk with insurance money). Thus, the desirability of the posture does not "depend" on the enemy's imitating it; it merely provides the capability to exploit the opportunities afforded if the enemy does imitate it. And is that so unlikely? Is it argued that Soviet posture and planning is entirely independent of US posture and doctrine? If you were a Soviet planner, convinced that the U.S. would retain "sizeable, protected and controlled reserves after any attack," would you build a force that could only be used one way, and that way involving initial attacks on US cities under all circumstances, rather than building a capability that gave your commander freedom of action?

(Apparently the answer to this, for the author of the comments cited, would be "Yes." He later suggests that there ~~should~~ should be emphasis on: "Consideration of the possibility that the retention of" such reserves, "instead of deterring the USSR from unrestricted attacks on US society under any circumstances, might cause the USSR to intensify its attack upon US society and to launch an all-out conventional attack against Western Europe." I don't follow this reasoning. If the USSR, facing only US reserves invulnerable to his remaining forces, hits US society because "there is nothing else to hit," why doesn't he just use his missiles on his own cities and save us the trouble?)

4. 4c Establishment of such wide spread and variable situations to be anticipated in planning for thermonuclear war would contribute to confusion and indecision at a time when timeliness of action would be all important.

Comment: If planner have not anticipated a range of situations at least this broad, there will either be (a) terrific confusion, indecision and replanning when actual, surprising and ambiguous contingencies occur, or (b) the available plans (plan) will prove to be entirely inappropriate and inadequate, but will have to be executed anyway.

This doesn't mean there is to be an entirely distinct plan for each contingency; but all these contingencies, and others, should be adequately covered by some plan. Hopefully, a single basic plan, properly designed after consideration of a range of contingencies, might serve for a range of situations; but this is not merely to be assumed, without test and comparison of alternatives. "Timely action" is not the goal of planners; it is "timely, appropriate and effective action."

5. 4d. Significant conventional forces are needed in order to go to the "central" war deterrent in order to provide the capability to conduct essential operations both during and after an initial nuclear exchange. The draft policy does not capture the need for such forces, or a policy for their use.

Comment: Doubt that ~~conventional~~ forces contribute significantly to deterrence of central war. Policy should probably say something about role of forces other than strategic offensive forces in the conduct, termination and aftermath of central war. (But certain important questions are not answered adequately or realistically by current plans: Precisely what forces are needed for such uses? How large? How equipped? How supplied, transported, maintained, controlled? As other current policy papers have indicated, it is not current US intent to fight a rerun of World War II in Europe after the nuclear exchange of World War III (or before)).

6. The objective of precluding "significant" US military inferiority would appear to tolerate some degree of US military inferiority which is "less than significant." It is thus a negatively stated objective. A preferable expression would be a positive one such as "To ensure, under all circumstances, significant US military superiority over an opponent."

Comment: "Significant inferiority" is meant to imply that there could be inferiority in numbers of vehicles, or in terms of specific components (e.g., conventional) which would not be "significant" in terms of overall capabilities.

Substituted expression, whether or not preferable, is not merely a positively-stated equivalent. It is not quite clear that author of these comments is aware of this. He later comments that the conditional statement of objective to "achieve decisive military superiority".. subject to the objective of limiting damage to the US to a level consistent with national survival and independence, "implies the possibility that the US would sacrifice significant military superiority to the opponent, if such sacrifice were necessary in order to limit a certain degree of damage to the US and its Allies." Yes, the cited statement does imply that, subject to precluding enemy military superiority, decisive military superiority is to be "sacrificed" to the goal of assuring national survival and independence.

7. The requirement for political control and options is self evident.

Comment: !

8. Controlled response during the initial exchange...is infeasible now and extremely hazardous through the foreseeable future. Political control and options should be treated succinctly (?), and controlled response confined to operations after the initial exchange, where it seems more feasible and offers certain advantages.

(After applications of the SIOP?)

9. Contingency planning. This paragraph should stress the importance of not paralyzing military action by providing too many alternative plans and by requiring too many decisions.

Comment: What was the last time a crisis caught us with "too many" contingency plans? What does experience indicate about the relative risks of "the Hamlet problem" as compared to the risks of being without

Attempts to implement a strategy including such options, or declaration of such intent, would at the present time be premature and could grave weaken the current deterrent posture.

In light of the relative capabilities, limitations and objectives of the US and its Allies and of the USSR and its satellites, there is no significant likelihood of thermonuclear attack against the former which would be so executed that it would be to the advantage of the US and/or its Allies in the current period to respond under a degree of control beyond that provided in current policy, doctrines and strategic plans.

It is possible, although not certain, that the future relative power positions of the US and the USSR may result in feasible options for controlled attack and response, which could lead to opportunities for negotiating pauses and war termination under conditions advantageous to the US and its Allies. Accordingly, US and Allied planning for the mid-1960's and beyond should take such possibilities into consideration.

((C/S AF believes that the ability to select and implement options such as those discussed...could, in the appropriate circumstances, make it possible for the US and its Allies to survive and prevail in a thermonuclear war with casualties and damage significantly reduced below levels which might be expected if such options are not available. ...increased latitude can and should be provided in feasible options for response to thermonuclear war emergency, preserving military advantage to the US as a basis for negotiating pause and war termination under conditions advantageous to the US and its Allies.

a. President and SecDef intend to exercise more direct control over plans and programs than in past.

b. There is a sharp shift from past policy, and it is necessary to make this evident and clear.

c. Plans and programs called for are somewhat more varied and complex than current ones.

2. "Explanations" are included because of (b) and (c) above. Also, they are not presented in order to argue for or justify the requirements cited, but to lay down, as a matter of ~~xx~~ current policy, guiding criteria for the continuous reevaluation and design of posture and strategy.

However, it may be that the purposes of these sections will have been served in the course of circulation of the draft. Final statement of policy could be more "succinct," in the sense of limiting itself to concise directives. (It is not obvious that this is necessary or desirable; why not "waste the paper"?) However, this policy will not be replaced by a set of "succinct" maxims which ~~xxx~~ provide "guidance" merely in the form of inspirational slogans which do not restrict the "freedom of action" of planners and programmers.

3. Virtually none of the requirements listed exist as of April, 1961. Almost none of them are available by May 15. But how about November, 1961? No one, going down the precise list of requirements, could honestly say that none of them could be substantially achieved prior to 1963, or even 1962, let alone 1965.

a) How long will it be ~~xxx~~ before a sizeable Polaris force could serve as strategic reserve? Are there no possibilities for improving the flexibility and endurance--prior to commitment--of an airborne alert force? Is controlled use of Minuteman missiles remaining after enemy initial attack impossible: if design could be altered to include selective firing?

b) How long will it be before currently-planned mobile command posts will assure an authorized response, and will provide the basis for selective response?

c) Given mobile command posts, bomb alarm systems and the possibilities for a retaliatory "doctrine," how long would it take to institute physical safeguards against unauthorized action?

d) How long would it take to improve the bomb alarm system to give more, and more reliable, status information and information (e.g., to mobile command posts) on the size and pattern of enemy attack basic data for a selective response?

e) How long would it take to change plans for siting additional Minuteman missiles next to cities, or upwind?

f) How long would it take to institute a minimal adequate fallout shelter program? ((This is not essential, by the way, to the achievement of major improvements, corresponding to the ones cited above, though it would be useful and could be accomplished quickly. Active anti-ICBM defense is in no sense essential to the achievement of significant and useful controlled response; if it were, controlled response would hardly be feasible in 1965.))

g) How long would it take to provide new, alternative options for the use of the alert force: 1) excluding major non-military targets; 2) holding strategic reserves, e.g., Polaris; 3) excluding individual satellites, and Communist China; 4) excluding governmental control centers?

h) How long would it take to redo the SIGP. to maximize flexibility